



HALMATURUS BENNETTI.

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Bennett's Wallaby.

HEAD AND FOREARM, OF THE SIZE OF LIFE.

THREE species of the larger Kangaroos are indigenous to the Island of Tasmania, or Van Diemen's Land, viz. *Macropus major*, *Halmaturus Bennettii*, and *H. Billardieri*. Of these the *H. Bennettii* is intermediate in size, and is the most important, since its flesh is a staple commodity as an article of food, and its skin affords no inconsiderable profit to the settlers, vast numbers of skins being annually sold.

The life-sized portrait of the upper portion of this animal will convey a just conception of its physiognomy, while the reduced figures, which are drawn to scale, will show how disproportionate in size are its hind quarters: it is these latter parts of the animal which are eaten by all classes, from the Governor of the colony to the stockmen. The relative weights and admeasurements of the two sexes are given on the succeeding page, to which I must therefore refer my readers for further particulars respecting the species.



HALMATURUS BENNETTI.

J Gould and H C Richter, del et lith.

Hutchinson & Watson, Imp.

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- Macropus Bennettii*, Waterh. in Proc. of Zool. Soc., part v. p. 103.—Ib. in Jard. Nat. Lib. Marsupialia, p. 211. pl. 19.
——— (*Halmaturus*) *fruticus*, Ogilby, Ann. of Nat. Hist. 1838, vol. i. p. 219.
Halmaturus Ualabatus, Gray, Mag. of Nat. Hist. new ser. 1837, vol. i. p. 583.
——— *Bennettii*, Gould, Mon. of Macropodidæ, pl. —.—Wagn. in Schreb. Saug. Suppl. 111, 112. Heft, p. 115.—Gray, List of Mamm. in Coll. Brit. Mus., p. 89.
Macropus ruficollis, var. *Bennettii*, Waterh. Nat. Hist. of Mamm., vol. i. p. 130.—Gunn in Proc. Roy. Soc. of Van Diem. Land, vol. ii. p. 88.
Halmaturus leptonyx, Wagn.
Brush Kangaroo, Colonists of Van Diemen's Land.
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THE native habitat of the animal here represented is Van Diemen's Land and the larger islands in Bass's Straits. It would be useless to attempt an enumeration of the localities in which it may be found, since its dispersion may be said to be general over the islands named, from the snowy summits of Mount Wellington and the hills of lesser elevation to the forests in the lowest valleys; it evinces, however, a decided preference to situations of a humid character, being seldom, if ever, seen on the hot and sandy plains: the localities it affects afford it a retreat, so secure as to preclude all chance of its extermination, although many thousands are killed annually for the sake of its flesh, which is very generally eaten and highly esteemed, being delicate, juicy and well-flavoured; its skin also forms a considerable article of commerce, being largely exported from Van Diemen's Land into England for the manufacture of the upper parts of boots and shoes, for which it is admirably adapted, besides being extensively used for the same purpose in the colony. I have read advertisements in the Hobart Town newspapers, stating that three thousand skins were immediately wanted, and which were quickly supplied by the settlers, servants and shepherds at the out-stations: the skins are generally taken off on the spot where the animal is killed, and afterwards stretched on the ground to dry; they are then sold for about fourpence or sixpence each to persons who visit the stock stations of the interior for the purpose of collecting them, and who retail them again in Hobart Town or Launceston to the advertiser or others for colonial consumption or for exportation.

The Bennett's Wallaby is gregarious in its habits, and although truly a brush animal, does not confine itself so strictly to localities of that description as the smaller members of the genus, but frequently resorts to the thinly-timbered forests and the crowns of the low grassy hills, always, however, seeking security in the thick brush when pursued, or such steep rocky acclivities as present almost insurmountable obstacles to the pursuit with dogs. It is one of the most hardy members of its family, and would doubtless readily become acclimatized in this country, since the temperature of Van Diemen's Land more nearly resembles that of the British Islands than does any other part of Australia, in proof of which I may mention that numbers have been bred in the Menagerie of the Zoological Society, in that of the late Earl of Derby, and others.

"In a large piece of enclosed ground in his Lordship's park," says Mr. Waterhouse, "I had the pleasure of seeing many individuals of the Brush Kangaroo in a state of comparative freedom, and where they appeared to thrive well. When I entered the paddock in which they were kept, being all concealed beneath some heath, I was not aware of their presence until, on approaching their place of shelter, they suddenly elevated the fore part of their bodies and then darted off to a distant spot with great swiftness. When at rest they frequently assume a singular position; the fore feet are applied to the ground, and they at the same time sit upon their haunches, having the hind legs stretched forwards, and perfectly straight, as well as the tail, which lies between them. The young animal does not finally quit the pouch of the mother until some time after it has attained the size of a full-grown rabbit; at which time it does not differ in colouring from the parent."

The full-grown male varies in weight from forty to sixty pounds: the haunch and loins are the only parts

that are eaten, and these are constantly exposed for sale in Hobart Town, Launceston, and other parts of the country. The female closely resembles the male in colour, but is about one-third less in size.

Mr. Waterhouse, who gave the specific appellation of *Bennettii* to this animal, in honour of a late talented Secretary of the Zoological Society, is now inclined to consider it to be merely a local variety of the *Halmaturus ruficollis* of New South Wales, an animal which does not accord with it in colour, and which is of a somewhat larger size; it will be seen that I have treated them as distinct: in either case it becomes necessary, in order duly to illustrate the subject, to figure both.

Fur rather long and moderately soft; general tint a very deep grey, inclining to black on the back; somewhat paler on the sides of the body, with a rust-like tint on the back of the neck, base of ears, the haunches, shoulders, and in the region of the eye; under surface of the body and the inner side and fore part of the hinder legs greyish-white; muzzle black; crown of the head brownish-black; an obscure whitish line extends backwards from the corners of the mouth, and becomes obliterated on the cheeks; lips dirty-white; chin blackish; ears white internally, black externally; hands, toes, and outer side of the heel black; hairs of the tail (excepting at the base, where they are of the same colours and character as those of the body) black, broadly annulated with white near the apex; tip of the tail black, under side of the tail white; the hairs on the upper part of the body are of a deep slate-colour at the base, the remaining portion of each hair is black, annulated with white, or more generally with pale rust-colour; on the under parts of the body the hairs are of a deep slate-colour, with the apical portion white.

The figure of the head is of the natural size; that of the entire animal is much reduced.